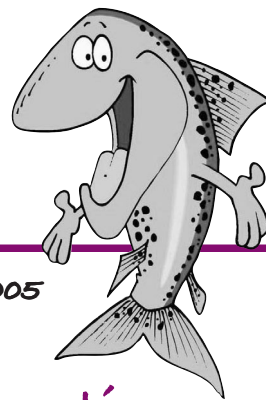


M.A.Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH

Spring 2005



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Members!!

Feature Fish - Arctic Grayling

August 22, 1805

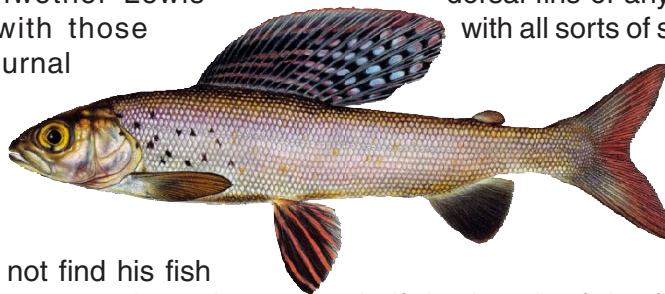
"late in the evening I made the men form a bush drag, and with it in about two hours they caught 528 very good fish, most of them large trout.....among them I now for the first time saw ten or a douzen of a white species of trout. they are of a silvery colour except on the back and head where they are of a bluish cast. the scales are much larger than the speckled trout, but in their form position of their teeth fins teeth and mouth &c they are precisely like them. they are not generally quite as large, but equally well flavored."

Even if his writing and spelling was not quite what we are used to reading these days, there is no mistaking the Montana fish that Meriwether Lewis wrote about with those words in his journal almost two hundred years ago. It was an arctic grayling.

Lewis did not find his fish on the cold, barren arctic tundra though, instead he was writing about a fish he found in what is now the Beaverhead River in southwest Montana. This fish, the arctic grayling, is a fish that is very unique. The only populations of grayling in the lower 48 states were found in Michigan and Montana, and sadly, the grayling in Michigan have disappeared. That means Montana is now the only place in the United States (except Alaska) where fluvial (flew-vee-al) or river-dwelling grayling can still be found.

Once you have seen a grayling, it would be hard to mistake it for any other fish in

Montana. The best way to identify a grayling is by looking at it's dorsal fin – the big fin on the back of the fish. Grayling have one of the strangest, but prettiest dorsal fins of any fish. Filled with all sorts of shiny purple, blue and pink, the dorsal fin on a grayling may be almost half the length of the fishes' entire body.



Besides the dorsal fin, grayling also have a small adipose (add-i-poze) fin between the dorsal fin and the tail. This fin gives you a good clue that grayling belong to the trout and salmon family. Like other members of this family of fish, grayling require very cold, clean water. They spawn in the spring, spreading their eggs over clean gravel in moving water. Grayling eat a variety of bugs and smaller fish, along with crayfish and small freshwater shrimp. They are not known for growing very large, most are less than a foot long. The largest grayling ever

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Look Here!

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- PAGE 3** State Record Fish
- PAGE 3** How Do Bugs Equal Rainbows?
- PAGE 4** Join the Club



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

M.A.Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH

Arctic Grayling

Continued from cover

caught in Montana was 20 inches long and weighed a little under 4 pounds. It was caught in Washtub Lake in 2003.

Most grayling today are found in lakes instead of rivers, and there are still quite a few places, especially in western Montana where you can go to catch one. And although they may be beautiful, grayling are probably not the smartest fish swimming in Montana. They can be caught pretty easily, and will bite on many different kinds of lures, flies, or live bait.

The grayling in our Montana rivers are not doing quite as well as grayling found in our lakes. There are just a few rivers where grayling live, and the drought of the past few years have been really hard on them. Biologists and ranchers are working hard to protect the remaining fluvial grayling, and everyone hopes they can get the job done.

It would be a shame to lose a fish so important to the history of Montana that they were being written about 200 years ago. If you've never seen or caught a grayling yourself, talk to your family, and launch your own Voyage of Discovery. You might find yourself making an entry in your journal just like Lewis & Clark did long ago.

Outdoors just for kids:

Get your gear ready for spring fishing. Spring fishing is just around the corner, and it's time to make sure you're tackle is ready to go. For spin fishermen, that means it's time to take the old line off your reels and replace it with new line. Haul out your tackle box and take a look at the tangle of spoons, spinners, hooks and leaders from last summer and take them apart, putting the spoons and spinners back in the trays.

If you don't have a hook hone, that would be a good thing to buy. Use it to sharpen the hooks on your lures so they're all set for spring. And then make a list of things you'll need to buy - snaps, sinkers, hooks, maybe some new lures.

For fly fishermen, if you haven't been tying flies for the past few

months, it's not too late to start now. Tie up at least several dozen of each pattern that you need. And then take a look at a fly-tying book and see what new ones you want to try this summer.

Take a look at your fly reel and make sure it's running smoothly. Then get a line cleaning pad and clean your fly line. Finally, replace that old leader and tippet with a new one so you're ready to go.

Then make a list of any other items you might need to buy before you head to the lakes, rivers and streams. It won't be long before all the ice is gone. When that time comes, you want to be ready to go fishing.

Mark Henckel -
Gazette outdoor editor

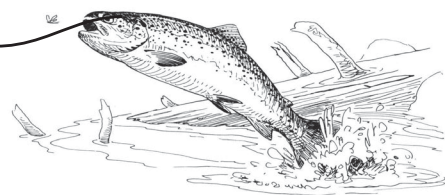
Thank You Plum Creek Foundation!



The generous folks at Plum Creek Timber Company and the Plum Creek Foundation have donated \$5,000 to the Hooked on Fishing Program. The funds will be used for school bus charges, equipment, and supplies. This will be a great boost to the program!

Thanks again!

Hooked ON FISHING



Hooked On Fishing Student Catches State Record Fish While HOFNOD Instructors Look On

On Sunday, February 27, while ice fishing on Bitterroot Lake west of Kalispell, Hooked on Fishing Student Troy Fraley landed a state record pygmy Whitefish. The state record pygmy measured 9 inches in length and weighed .23 pounds (3.8 ounces). When Troy presented his fish to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks on Monday, another angler, Kevin Hadley, 42, brought in a pygmy that weighed exactly the same, although it was one-quarter inch shorter. So Troy and Kevin now share the state record, since state records are determined by weight.

Troy was fishing at a depth of 125 feet with a small jig and maggot. HOFNOD Instructors John Cloninger and Jan Thon had met Troy and his family for a morning of ice fishing on Bitterroot Lake. When Troy brought the fish out on the ice, John measured it.

"I was elated," says HOFNOD instructor John Cloninger. "I was never there when a person caught a record fish. As soon as I saw the fish, I thought it would be a record because it was very large for a pygmy whitefish."

Troy put the pygmy in a bucket and packed it with ice shavings produced by the ice auger. On the way home, the pygmy was weighed on a certified scale at Albertson's Grocery. Troy's record was certified the next day at FWP. Troy is a Hooked on Fishing Student in John Stebbins' 4th grade class at Edgerton School in Kalispell.

The pygmy whitefish is one of three types of whitefish that live in Montana. The pygmy, along with the larger mountain whitefish, is native. The lake whitefish was introduced to Montana. The pygmy is distinguished from the mountain whitefish by its larger size and the relatively small size of its eye. The pygmy has a very large eye in relation to its size. Pygmy whitefish live near the bottom of lakes such as Little Bitterroot, Ashley, and Flathead. They feed on tiny zooplankton, bottom insects, and mysis.



Hooked on Fishing Student Troy Fraley with his state record pygmy whitefish

What to do if you think you've caught a state record:

- Don't clean or freeze the fish; keep the fish on ice
- Take a picture of the fish
- Get the fish weighed as soon as possible on a certified scale (grocery store, post office) and get a signed slip from the scale operator
- Contact the nearest FWP office and bring your fish in to see if it's a state record.

Early Season Rainbow Trout

Ice has melted off the reservoirs and ponds, so it's a great time to start fishing for rainbow trout. Because spring is spawning time, rainbows will be actively looking for spawning areas even though many prairie reservoirs don't have egg-laying habitat. Trout will head toward areas where runoff water may be trickling in. They'll also go to the shallow flats near shore.

Because these shallows warm up more quickly than the deeper portions of these ponds and reservoirs, insect life will be more active there and trout can feed more easily.

Early spring rainbow trout generally require a slow presentation. Cast out a nymph or a

continued on back page

Join M•A•Y Club

MONTANA ANGLING YOUTH

- Anyone preschool through elementary can join!
- No meetings to attend, just get great stuff by mail!
- Receive fun newsletters at your home filled with information, tips, & games!
- Get cool fishing tackle and outdoor items you can use right away!
- Learn about fishing and the water environment!
- Write us and share your fishing tips, fishing photos, and fish stories with kids around Montana. (Please write and draw **in pen or in VERY DARK pencil**.)

Mail or drop off your letters or registration to:
M•A•Y Club
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, Montana 59901

KIDS:

If you are getting this newsletter, you are already a member, so share this registration form with a friend who might want to join!

Registration Form

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Early Season

Continued from page 3



lure and retrieve it very slowly. Rainbows won't be as willing to move and chase a meal as they will be when the waters are warmer. Often, they'll bite very lightly.

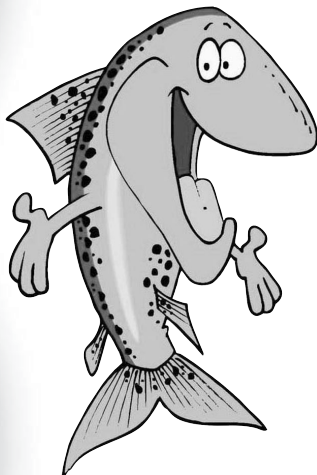
But you can catch them at this time of year and you'll usually enjoy a good wildlife show while you do. Migrating ducks and birds will be brightly colored as they head north toward breeding grounds. Muskrats will swim past you. And you just might catch a dandy rainbow trout or two to make the day complete.

By Mark Henckel –
Billings Gazette

M•A•Y Club
NEWSLETTER
is published by



**Montana Fish,
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